

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION**

Please replace the paragraph at page 13, lines 3-13 with the following paragraph:

An important feature of the present invention is the preparation of a preblend that is storage stable for at least six months at 25°C and ~~—% relative~~ 40% relative humidity. Another important feature is the preparation of a container from a preform of the present invention wherein the oxygen scavenging capabilities of the barrier layer are not activated until the container is filled with an aqueous fluid. Accordingly, the container has a long shelf life prior to filling, and a longer oxygen barrier capability after filling with an aqueous fluid.